1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "gum", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called gag or tegag, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Metereologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

"In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
in (the month of) Sānyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

132 ●137 241 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three distinct climatic zones in their country:

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

132 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with
● 137 average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega
241 is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hegenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone.

[361]

132 Qolla - below 6,000 feet: hot. with average temperatures
137 in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and most border areas of the country.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

487 133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; RUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[324] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

●137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate
241 that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
248

6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 241 [248] koba (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 The two most important trees of the highlands are the 313 Ted and the Zegba. The Ted, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Kuo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons:Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahēr zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, qul-
278 qual, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
824 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
824 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it
136 is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connections between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol. 20, 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

W. E. D. ALLEN

Meeting of the Society, 18 January 1943

114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of 133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

[137] These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited [361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic.[1] Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track[2] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[1] i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -Analyst

[2] i.e. between Debra Markos and Mota. Ed.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town.

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June.

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick.

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people.

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups.

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

travellers in the region of the southern lakes.[1] Other and earlier cultures may well have percolated into the Highland by the same routes along the ridges which are established for the mediaeval Copto-Ethiopian culture.

I am afraid I have put before the Society some rather hazardous lines of inquiry, with implications which necessarily impose a great deal of comparative study before they can be established or disproved. My excuse in these days when no one has the leisure to pursue exacting studies is that it is worth putting on record lines of inquiry which some of us may be able to turn to at a later date.

All photographs, unless acknowledged, were taken by the late Captain Mark Pilkington.

DISCUSSION

Before the paper the PRESIDENT (the Rt. Hon. SIR GEORGE CLERK) said: Captain Allen has been well known to us in the past as an authority on Georgia and as the author of an excellent history of the Ukraine. Military duty took him to Ethiopia for the operations which restored the Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne and capital—operations in which others of our Fellows, particularly Colonel Orde Wingate, Major Hugh Boustead, and Mr. Wilfred Thesiger, took a prominent part. Some day when the war is over I hope that the story of the Abyssinian campaign will come out, because not only is it in many ways a fantastic story, but it makes a very fine chapter in our annals.

It has been a little difficult for Captain Allen to prepare his paper for this evening, first of all because nearly all his photographs were left behind in Africa, and secondly, because his military duties have given him very little time to get his paper into shape. We look forward to hearing the impressions which the country and people of the Ethiopian Highlands have made upon him in the course of his military duties.

Captain Allen then read the paper printed above

The PRESIDENT: The lecture this evening has stirred memories of forty years ago. The lecturer talked about those miles of red-hot pokers. I have always held that if you give Nature a chance she is the best gardener in the world. I came once over a plateau in Abyssinia, a bit of waste country where no white man had ever been before, and there I found a great sheet of red-hot pokers and rosemary: the masses of orange-scarlet flowers backed by the grey-mauve of the rosemary were wonderfully beautiful. It finished in a sort of marsh in which there were immense stretches of white and scarlet arum lilies, inconceivably spectacular.

The lecturer has described the good manners and charm of the Shoan Abyssinians, but it is true that they are very quick to take offence as well as to show affection; they are very volatile. What he said about the Tigraians was also true; they are the tough northerners, more dependable, but not so easy to get on with. I will give you an instance of the funny though rather charming ways of the Abyssinians. Forty years ago I was on a certain expedition with a so-called Abyssinian army: two thousand scallywags, with two thousand small boys to carry their rifles, and two thousand unfortunate second wives to carry their food. We descended the escarpment to the west, and came into populated country. The Abyssinian soldiers were living on the country, and here they started to be extremely tiresome. I had to chase them off the inhabitants and

[1] See 'Africa Orientale,' Italiana Guida, published by Touring Club Italiana, 1939.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth."

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans.

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of [43] country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [23] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [31] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a [712] high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-20 have not been processed for the files.-Analyst]

CAP. XI.—*Of the fashion and situation of the monasteries and their customs, first this of St. Michael.*

346 361 The manner of these monasteries as to their sites and customs: all are situated on the greatest and highest cliffs, or the deepest they can find. This one of St. Michael is situated on a very steep rock at the foot of another very high rock, where no one can ascend. The stone of which these rocks consist is of the grain of the walls of the port of Portugal.[1] They are very great rocks. The land around 137 these rocks is all covered with very great forests, and besides wild olive trees and high grass between them, in which there is much basil. The trees which are not wild olive trees are not trees known to us; all are without fruit. In the narrow valleys which belong to this monastery there are orange trees, lemon trees, citron trees, pear trees and fig trees of all kinds, both of Portugal and India; peach trees, cabbages, coriander, cardamine, wormwood,[2] myrtle and other sweet-smelling and medicinal herbs, all ill profited by 461] because they are not good working men: and the earth produces these like wild plants, and it would produce whatever was planted and sown in it. The monastery house 346 looks quite like a church building, constructed like ours. It has around it a circuit like a cloister, covered above in the same manner as the body of the monastery. It has three entrances, as ours are, one principal one, and two side ones. The roof of the church and of its cloisters is of wild straw, which lasts a man's life: the body of the church is built with naves very well constructed, and their arches are

[1] etc. [p.21] [2] Alosna.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Adens, marrecas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [131]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [131]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 178 181 [212] [577] been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 121 177 178 *Receptivity to Change*

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the [137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on [744] a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has